Claims

[c1]   What is claimed is:

1. A network node comprising:

a central processing unit (CPU) for controlling functionality of the network node;

a plurality of network ports for establishing contact with a network over a plurality of network lines;

a modem for establishing communications with a contact device over a telephone system; and

a memory for storing programs and data, the programs executable by the CPU, the memory comprising:

a network management program for analyzing network traffic on the network ports, identifying an emergency condition according to the network traffic, and generating an associated emergency condition identifier;

at least a contact telephone number of the contact device;

at least an emergency message; and

an emergency call-out program for utilizing the modem to dial the contact telephone number and send the emergency message to the contact device according to the emergency condition identifier.

[c2]   2. The network node of claim 1 further comprising:

an RS-232 serial port for establishing communications with a server over a serial cable, or with the modem; and

a switch for controlling the RS-232 port;

wherein when the switch is in a first setting the RS-232 port is capable of communicating with the server over the serial cable, and when the switch is in a second position the RS-232 port is capable of communicating with the modem.

[c3]   3. The network node of claim 1 wherein the network node is a management switch.

[c4]   4. The network node of claim 1 further comprising a database, the database comprising a plurality of entries, each entry comprising:

a condition event that corresponds to a possible value of the emergency condition identifier; and

corresponding message data;

the emergency call-out program containing code to index into the database according to the emergency condition identifier to locate an entry and to leave a message at the contact device according to the message data in the located entry.

[c5]   5. A method for providing emergency calling functionality to a network node, the network node connected to a network and comprising a network management program for identifying an emergency condition according to traffic on the network, the method comprising:

providing the network node with a modem to connect to a telephone system;

providing at least a contact telephone number of a contact device on the telephone system;

providing at least an emergency message;

selecting a contact telephone number and an emergency message according to an emergency condition of the network as identified by the network management program; and

causing the modem to dial the contact telephone number and send the emergency message to the contact device over the telephone system.